

JOSEPH J. MICKLEY.

NOT many years ago there were several substantial old houses standing on the north side of Market Street, east of Tenth, in the city of Philadelphia. These structures, which then wore an air of respectable old age, have been in recent years either totally destroyed or so extensively altered that the serene atmosphere of antiquated gentility no longer lingers about their busy exteriors.

On a morning in April, 1869, the present writer had occasion to call at one of these buildings,—No. 927. Several broad and weather-stained marble steps led up to an old-fashioned doorway, where the modern bell-pull and the antique brass knocker contended for recognition. Alike rusty as these were, it became a problem as to which would best secure communication with the interior. While the matter still seemed indefinite, it was set at rest by the advice of an obliging street-urchin, who volunteered his information with appropriate brevity and directness:

"Try the door. If it's loose, Daddy Mickley's home, sure. If it's locked, 'taint no use of knockin', for he's out."

Thus instructed, I tried the door. It happened to be "loose," and ushered me into a long dark entry, at the farther end of which a wide flight of heavy oak stairs led to the upper rooms in the rear of the building. Among these rooms, one of the first to be reached was evidently a workshop; and here was encountered the only living being as yet visible in the spacious old mansion. Upon entering, I was met by a dignified and placid old gentleman, whose appearance was very much in keeping with the house in which he dwelt. He was quite evidently of the old school, and his pleasant voice gave me an old-school welcome. A fine broad forehead rested above a pair of the most kindly eyes that can be imagined, and belonged to a splendidly-shaped head, which was

totally bald, save for a slight fringe of white hairs about either temple. The mouth was, in its expression, even more prepossessing than the eyes, and the whole bearing of the old gentleman—who had evidently reached his three-score and ten, but who, as was equally apparent, carried the warmth and vigor of youth still with him—was calculated to please and impress the least observant visitor.

The late Joseph J. Mickley comprised qualities at once more attractive and more unusual than are often met with in one person. He was distinguished throughout the world, during more than a generation, for the diligence and success of his numismatic researches, and his collection of rare coins was for a long time the most valuable in this country. As a collector of scarce books and autographs he was hardly less noted or less successful. But in Philadelphia he was most of all admired for his delightful social qualities and his extensive information on a surprising variety of topics. During forty years his house was a rendezvous for a numerous group of specialists,—not alone in his own favorite pursuits, which, indeed, were both many and diverse, but in any and every department of art or learning. Coin-hunters, autograph-dealers, historical students, philosophers, musical-instrument-makers, noted performers, and performers of less note, all the way down to "scratch-clubs," were his constant visitors for years. It is probable that no private house in Philadelphia has entertained a greater number of intellectually distinguished people than the old mansion just referred to, where Mickley resided from 1842 to 1869. Musical celebrities from every country hastened to make his acquaintance, and such was the magnetism of his personality that acquaintances thus formed seem never to have been lost sight of by either host or guest.

During his European tour, which lasted from 1869 to 1872, the then venerable traveller was continually meeting friends among persons who had called upon him at various times, dating back in one case as long before as 1820. They always appeared to have known beforehand of his coming, and he always remembered them and the circumstances under which he had first met them.

The social reunions at Mickley's were informal to the last degree, and the accommodations correspondingly primitive. They usually took place in his workshop. Crazy stools or empty piano-boxes generally served for seats. The surrounding furniture comprised barrels, cases, and chests, filled to overflowing with the host's ever-increasing antiquarian treasures. If a quartette were assembled,—and many times the musical party was enlarged to a quintette or a septette,—an adjournment was necessary to a room less crowded, but equally sparse of conventional furniture.

Mr. Mickley was always happy to join in these impromptu musical assemblies, when occasion offered, although performing music was one of the few things which he never succeeded in doing well. He invariably played the viola on these occasions,—perhaps, as Schindler hints about Beethoven, because indifferent playing on the viola is not so noticeable as on other instruments. As was to have been expected from so pronounced an antiquarian, he had small sympathy for modern music. He even rebelled against the gentle innovations of Mendelssohn, contending, not without an approach to accurate judgment, that Haydn and Mozart had completely covered the field of chamber-music. While in the midst of numerous and always congenial pursuits during his long life, quartette-playing remained a favorite pastime of very many days in very many years.

Mr. Mickley's intellect was so many-sided and so evenly balanced that it is difficult to name his predominant bias. It is very nearly safe, however, to say that this was his historic faculty. In the writings, still chiefly unprinted,

which were left behind him, he was at once the most minute and the most compact of historians. Emerson never condensed his rare thoughts into smaller compass, not even in his "English Traits," than Mr. Mickley has condensed his facts and observations. There is a small pamphlet extant, the manuscript of which was read by him in 1863 on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of a noted Indian massacre in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, where several of his ancestors perished. It contains historic material enough for a volume. To indicate his early passion for amassing reliable data, the same sketch shows that a portion of its facts had been obtained, while he was still a boy, from then aged eye-witnesses of the affair, nearly fifty years before its story was thus put into permanent shape.

He mastered the Swedish language, after having passed his seventieth year, chiefly that he might write a correct history of the first settlement of Swedes on the Delaware River below Philadelphia. At the age of seventy-two he spent several months in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and while there placed himself in communication with every prominent librarian of the country, besides scholars in Denmark, Holland, and Germany. He personally inspected a great mass of documents and ancient volumes. Yet the result of all this is contained in a manuscript of less than thirty large folio pages, literally crowded with invaluable data. This was read before the Historical Society of the State of Delaware in 1874. It has never been put in type, and is almost wholly made up of material which has no existence elsewhere in the English language.

A single instance will serve to show the minuteness and persistence of his investigations. In one of the public libraries of Stockholm Mickley discovered an ancient Dutch manuscript signed by Peter Minuit. No scholar within reach could master its contents. The private secretary of the ambassador from Holland, who was appealed to, asserted beforehand that he "could read

anything that ever was written in Dutch." Yet, after a long inspection, he frankly owned his inability to decipher a single word of it. Mr. Mickley was determined to ascertain the contents. As the document could not be bought at any price, and could not even be removed over-night from its place of keeping, he caused photographs to be taken of it. One such copy was sent to a very learned acquaintance in Amsterdam, and another to a noted scholar at Leipsic. In the course of subsequent travels he found accurate translations awaiting him from both sources. The importance of the manuscript in this connection will be the more appreciated when it is remembered that Peter Minuit commanded the first expedition ever sent to the shores of the Delaware River.

Being thus by nature an historian, it is but natural that Mr. Mickley should have left behind him ample materials for telling the story of his own life. From these we learn that the family name was originally Michelet. It dates back to the French Huguenots who, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, settled in Zweibrücken, a German province. The first foothold of the family in this country was established in that portion of Pennsylvania which has for more than a century been thickly peopled by that enlightened and art-fostering sect, the Moravians. It was from the Moravian influence that Joseph J. Mickley first experienced a fondness for music and its appropriate artistic surroundings. He was born March 21, 1799, at South Whitehall, a township then in Lehigh County, but originally comprised in Northampton. At the age of seventeen he went to Philadelphia as apprentice to a piano-maker. At that time the method of building a piano-forte was as different from the advanced art of these days as was the instrument itself. The piano-maker had then to work from the legs upward. His necessary duties demanded knowledge which is now distributed among several entirely distinct sets of artificers. That young Mickley satisfactorily completed his apprenticeship

may be inferred from two facts: he started in business for himself in August, 1822, and in October, 1831, the Franklin Institute awarded him a prize for skill in the manufacture of pianos.

From this time on, his business life, though of long duration, was uneventful, and may be summed up in very few words. From his original starting-place at No. 67 North Third Street, he removed, four years later, to a store on the site now occupied by a portion of the publishing house of J. B. Lippincott Company. Here he remained until 1842, and then established himself in the building mentioned at the beginning of this article, where he continued to live until the final closing up of his business in 1869.

It does not appear that Mr. Mickley was ever actively engaged in the manufacture of piano-fortes. He continued, however, to tune pianos to the end of his life; and it is reported that he could never be induced to alter his terms from the original fee of one dollar which was customary forty years ago. He also became noted far and wide as a repairer of violins and other stringed instruments. At one time, a violin which had belonged to George Washington was sent to him for this purpose. Ole Bull, who happened to be in town at the time, hearing of the circumstance, hastened to the shop for the purpose of examining and playing upon the historic instrument. Mickley also became an authority in regard to the value and authenticity of these instruments, although he never indulged in the passion of making collections in this field. His minuteness of observation was frequently manifested. While stopping at Venice in 1870 he notes down in his diary, "A man came to the hotel with some violins for sale. Among them was a Hieronymus Amati. It was a good one, but the head and neck were not genuine." At another time, a violin was sent to his place from a distant locality for repairs. The instrument was preceded by a lengthy letter beseeching his special care for its welfare, and setting forth in extravagant

terms its great intrinsic value and its peculiarly interesting "belongings." Anticipating a treasure, Mr. Mickley sent for some violin-connoisseurs to enjoy with him a first sight of the precious instrument. On opening the express-package a very worthless "fiddle" was revealed. After the laugh had gone round, he said dryly, "I think the value of this must be in its 'belongings.'"

In the old house on Market Street Mr. Mickley was not alone popular among prominent people from afar. He was equally loved by his neighbors on all sides. Many of the more unconventional of these knew him best by the familiar title of "Daddy." To the better-educated class of young musicians he was almost as much a father as a friend. Nor were his close friendships confined to the young. Among his most steadfast admirers was an old-bachelor German musician by the name of Plich. Herr Plich was a piano-teacher, and it was under his tuition that the afterward favorite prima-donna Caroline Richings made her first public appearance as a pianist in 1847. This old teacher induced Mickley to take him as a boarder, and he lived for a number of years in one of the upper back rooms of No. 927. One night a fire broke out in a building directly contiguous with the rear of the Mickley mansion. There was great consternation, of course, and busy efforts on the owner's part to gather together the manifold contents of his treasure-house. When all had been at length secured in a place of safety, he bethought himself of Herr Plich. Hastening to the upper room, he discovered the old man in a state of semi-insanity, marching up and down the apartment, and carrying in his hands only a valuable viola. So confused was he with fright that main force was required to get him out of the room. After seeing him safely out of the front door, Mickley went back and secured a considerable sum of paper money which had been totally overlooked for the sake of the beloved viola. Plich at his death bequeathed the viola to Mickley, and it was the only instru-

ment which the latter always refused to part with during his lifetime. The entire savings of Plich were also left in trust to Mickley, to be distributed for such charitable objects as he should consider most worthy, and for about twenty-seven years Mr. Mickley carefully administered this trust.

Mr. Mickley's most remarkable success in life was obtained as a numismatist. His habit of collecting coins began almost in childhood. It has been stated that at the age of seventeen he first became interested in coin-hunting, owing to his difficulty in finding a copper cent coined in 1799, the year of his birth. Every student of numismatism knows that this piece is exceedingly rare. The one sold in Mr. Mickley's collection after his decease brought no less than forty dollars. The taste thus formed continued a prevailing one for sixty years. It is surprising to find how speedily he became a leading and recognized authority. Although as guileless as a child and the easy victim of numerous thefts throughout his life, he was scarcely ever deceived in the value of a coin, token, or medal. Once, at Stockholm, in 1871, he visited a museum where rare coins were exhibited. "The collection," says his diary, "is very, very rich in Greek and Roman, but particularly in Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon. There are not many United States coins, but among them I was astonished to find a very fine half-eagle of 1815." The known rarity of this coin thus on exhibition in a far country very naturally attracted the keen eyes of the aged collector.

These researches, continuing year after year, grew to be more and more valuable, until they became widely celebrated. By the time he had reached middle age he was as well known among the guild of antiquarians as a Quaker is known by his costume. Before his death he had been elected a member of all the prominent societies in numismatics, history, and archæology throughout the world. The last honor of this kind, which reached him in his eightieth year, was a notice of his election to membership in the Société Française de Numismatique

et d'Archéologie. His great collections in this department of knowledge were not confined to coins, but extended also to the literature of the subject. This was splendidly illustrated in his famous library, which comprised many works of the utmost value and scarcity.

A taste thus developed in early youth naturally became in the course of years a habit, a sentiment, a leading passion of Mickley's nature. By the year 1867 his coin-collection had become the most extensive in this country. By this time also the entertainment of curious visitors absorbed a good share of the collector's daily duties. He was naturally proud of his treasures, and took a great delight in showing them to all who came. Utterly devoid of suspicion, he was a ready victim to designing persons. The following memorandum, which was found among his later papers, will show how he suffered from this source:

"I have become rather indifferent about numismatics, or, at least, about collecting coins. It was a great source of amusement for a period of over fifty years. But, having been so unfortunate at different times with my coins, it is, as it were, a warning to desist from collecting any more. In the year 1827 the United States dollars from 1794 to 1803, all good specimens, together with some foreign coins, were stolen. In 1848 about twenty half-dollars were taken. In 1854, after showing my collection to three Southern gentlemen (as they called themselves) I missed three very scarce half-eagles. The great robbery was in 1867. In Jaffa, Palestine, a small lot, worth about one thousand francs, with a collection of Egyptian curiosities, was stolen at the hotel; and, finally, last winter, at Seville, Spain, some old Spanish coins were missing while I was showing them to some persons."

The "great robbery" above alluded to occurred on the evening of April 13, 1867. It was of such magnitude as to cause a wide sensation at the time, and enlisted the sympathies of his coin-hunting brethren the world over. Mr. Mickley's chief precautions, notwithstanding his previous warnings of danger from

another source, had been against fire. In a third-story room was his cabinet. This had been long since filled, chiefly with an unbroken and historic list of American coins. The additional accumulations of years, nearly all foreign, and many of great rarity, had been stored in an old piano-case in his bedroom, where, as he said, in the event of fire they would be close at hand. On the evening in question Mickley was alone in his workshop, engaged in repairing a musical instrument. He had then been living entirely alone for a number of years. A single servant, who provided his meals, had gone home. About nine o'clock the loud barking of his dog in the yard below called him to the window. It was afterward found that a pair of old shoes thrown from an upper room by the burglars had thus called away the attention both of dog and master from what was going on inside. An hour later a caller discovered several pieces of money lying in the hall. An investigation disclosed the startling loss which he had sustained. The entire contents of the piano-box had been carried off. A private desk had also been broken open and despoiled of a few medals, although its chief contents were intact. A gold pencil, the gift of Ole Bull, and other keepsakes, remained undisturbed. But the larger portion of a collection of foreign coins, one of the most complete in the world, and the product of a lifetime's intelligent research, was gone!

It was a heavy calamity, and one from which the old collector never fully recovered. Sir Isaac Newton's historic Fido did not do nearly the amount of irremediable damage when he overturned the lamp upon his master's papers. The actual pecuniary loss, reckoning at cost prices, was in the neighborhood of nineteen thousand dollars. The market value of such a collection was of course vastly greater, and increasing all the time at a good deal faster rate than compound interest. It was somewhat of a coincidence that Mr. Mickley had received and refused what he records as a "tempting offer" for the entire collection only a short time before the robbery.

The ardent passion of a lifetime was now chilled, and his one desire seemed to be to get rid of his remaining coins and of the responsibility which keeping them entailed. Such, however, was the completeness of Mickley's literary methods of condensing, that an entry of three or four lines made in his diary on the night of the robbery is all that he had to write about the appalling loss. A week or two afterward he records in the same volume the disposal of all the remaining coins, with an air of great relief, as he adds, "I do not doubt I should be robbed again if I kept them." A large box full of the most valuable had been taken, for safe-keeping, to the Mint just after the robbery; but these were sold with the rest. It is understood that this remnant of the original lot was disposed of for about sixteen thousand dollars, the largest purchaser being Mr. Woodward, of Roxbury, Massachusetts. The dollar of 1804 went to a New York collector for the enormous sum of seven hundred and fifty dollars.

Efforts to restore the lost treasure were not wanting. It might be supposed that the possession of such rare tokens of value would have speedily led to the discovery of their whereabouts. Mr. Mickley himself intimated that he suspected the quarter from which the depredation had come. Yet from that day until the present the secret has been as securely kept as that of the rifling of Lord Byron's letter from a vase at Abbotsford, or of the Duchess of Devonshire's portrait from the London Art-Gallery. In fact, the same mild generosity which had always characterized Mr. Mickley still came uppermost in the face of this trying disaster. He frequently sought to overlook the misdoings of petty thieves. A London pickpocket who had successfully practised upon him *Oliver Twist's* little game was only prosecuted because his testimony was insisted upon by the authorities. At the foot of the Pyramids he deplored the chastisement inflicted by an Arab sheik upon one of his native servants who had committed a similar depredation. His life-long friend the late Wil-

liam E. Dubois, of the United States Mint, has stated that "eight or nine years after the robbery a few very fine gold pieces of English coinage were offered for sale at the Mint cabinet-rooms. I was so well convinced that the labels were in his handwriting that I sent for him to come and see them. He could not deny the likeness, but seemed reluctant to entertain the subject at all."

During these years of study and research Mr. Mickley must not be thought of as a strict specialist. Side by side with his fascinating collection of coins there was an ever-growing library, the extent and value of which were never appreciated until his death. This accumulation was in itself an example of his cosmopolitan tastes. It was copious in local history, in biography, in music, in general literature, in costly and well-preserved black-letter editions, in illuminated missals dating back to the thirteenth century, and, above all else, in autographs. Of the latter, space cannot be spared here for anything approaching a full description. As some indication of their value, it may be mentioned that a letter of George Washington (the last he was known to write), dated six days before his death, was bought by George W. Childs, Esq., for one hundred and fifteen dollars. A letter of Abraham Lincoln to General McClellan fetched nearly one hundred dollars. There were also signed autograph letters of all the governors of Pennsylvania, of all the Presidents, and of all the signers of the Declaration of Independence. The latter group is rarely met with complete; and three of the scarcest names alone sold for as much as all the others put together. There were signatures also of about forty generals of the Revolutionary war, of both the British and American armies, and including Lafayette and Kosciusko. Both Napoleon and Josephine were represented; and the lovers of poetic justice will be glad to know that the latter name brought double that of the great emperor. In autographs of literary and musical celebrities the collection was extraordinarily rich, those of Goethe and Schil-

ler, Beethoven and Mozart, being conspicuous. But the chief rarity was a large album formerly owned by Babet von Ployer. This contained, among other treasures, a manuscript of Haydn, believed to be the only one ever offered for sale in this country. It also contained an India-ink sketch of Mozart, drawn by his wife Constance. At the sale in 1878 this album was knocked down for one hundred and twenty-six dollars, although three hundred dollars had been previously refused for it. The Mozart letter, a particularly interesting specimen, was sold for fifty-two dollars to M. H. Cross, Esq.

Turning from the autographs to the books, we find still greater value and variety. The historical portion, especially where it referred to local subjects, was almost phenomenal. One precious lot comprised a complete set of the first daily newspaper of the United States, beginning with the "Pennsylvania Packet" in 1771, and continuing unbroken, through several changes of title and proprietorship, for one hundred and seven years. An amusing incident is related in connection with Mr. Mickley's purchase of the larger portion of this series,—*"Poulson's Advertiser"* from 1800 to 1840. When the wagon was driven to his door, loaded with the purchase, the housekeeper exclaimed, "What ever is to be done with all this truck?" Yet this "truck," a mine of wealth to the future historian, was sold after Mickley's death for eight hundred dollars. There were city directories of several editions for ninety-three years. The black-letter list was quite large, and there were more than thirty editions of the Bible, some of great rarity, and nearly all in a fine state of preservation.

From the time of the coin-robbery the older acquaintances of Mr. Mickley noticed a decided change in him. On the subject of coins, once so voluble, he grew very reticent. His business, which had for many years appeared rather a pastime than a task to him, grew irksome. After a period of uncertainty, he finally decided to close up his affairs and spend some years in foreign travel.

In spite of advanced age, he was both physically and mentally well equipped for such a journey. His health had always been good. His temper seemed never to be ruffled. Of the French and German languages he was a master, and he had some knowledge of the Spanish, Italian, and Swedish. His previous extensive acquaintance with men of many nations and habits was kept fresh in mind by a remarkable memory. With all these advantages, the period of his travels was the most interesting of his life.

Mr. Mickley set sail on the 5th of June, 1869, being at that time a few months past his seventieth year. He remained abroad for three years, visiting every country in Europe, ascending the Nile to the first cataract, passing through the Suez Canal, and across a portion of Asia Minor and Palestine. He made two trips to Northern Sweden to behold the spectacle of the midnight sun. Being a week too late on the first season, he tried it again the following year. Passing through the entire length of the Gulf of Bothnia, and ascending the Tornea River, he entered Lapland, crossing the Arctic circle and penetrating the Arctic zone in a sledge-journey of seventy miles. The indomitable old traveller pushed on until he reached a small lumber-village named Pajala. On the night of June 23, 1871, crossing the river with a small party of Swedes and Finns, he ascended Mount Avasaxa, in Finland. At this altitude, he says, "the sky happened to be clear in the direction of the sun, and he shone in all his glory as the clock struck twelve."

During this prolonged absence he visited almost every considerable town in Germany, Holland, Italy, and England. The instant that he arrived at a town, he seemed to know the shortest cut to its museum. If there was an antiquarian in the place, he knew of it beforehand, and hastened either to make or renew an acquaintance. In the larger cities he was surrounded by these people, and he expressed unaffected surprise and pleasure at their attentions. He made visits of inspection to nearly every mint

in Europe, having been commissioned by the Philadelphia Mint to make purchases of rare coins for its cabinet. Here the old passion appears to have blazed up again for a little while. It was an entire surprise to his family to discover among his possessions at his death the nucleus of a new collection, which was sold for about two thousand dollars.

Mr. Mickley made at this period some valued acquaintances. Among these was the Italian composer Mercadante. At the time of Mickley's visit, in April, 1870, the composer, who was also president of the Conservatoire in Naples, had been blind for eight years. "The old gentleman," says Mickley (who, by the way, was only two years his junior), "held out his hand and bade me welcome. I told him it would be a lasting pleasure to have shaken hands with so highly distinguished a man, whose name had long since been favorably known in America. At this his face brightened; he arose from the sofa, shook my hand cordially, wishing me health, happiness, and a safe voyage." Later, at Brussels, he called on M. Fétis, the famous French musical critic and biographer. At that time, in his eighty-eighth year, Fétis was a fugitive from Paris, owing to the troubles of the Franco-Prussian war. Mr. Mickley's picture of the veteran *littérateur* and critic is an engaging one. He says, "Considering his great age, Mr. Fétis is very active. He climbed up the step-ladder to get books and to show me such as he considered the most rare and interesting. He is not only active in body, but he retains all the faculties of his mind. He appears to have a very happy disposition. While I was with him a continual smile was on his face, and it seemed to give him great pleasure to show me his books. He has been engaged in collecting them for over fifty years, and they have cost him a sum equal to three hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of a great many presents. The first book on music was printed in 1480." At Trieste he spent some time with the United States consul there, Mr. Thayer,

of Boston, best known to musical and literary people as the author of an exhaustive *Life of Beethoven*, which has been under way for nearly thirty years and is not yet finished. Mr. Thayer showed his visitor all the historic data and personal relics which he had collected for the book, of which at that date only one volume had been published. Since then Mercadante and Fétis have been gathered to their fathers. Their genial guest is also gone. The industrious Mr. Thayer lives, with three volumes of the *Life* completed, and every American, either literary or musical, will wish him well on to the conclusion of his *magnum opus*.

Mr. Mickley's plain personal habits remained almost unchanged by the many unforeseen exigencies of foreign travel. Once, at Rouen, six months after leaving home, he says, "Tasted wine for the first time in Europe, as the water here did not agree with me." A little later, at Munich, he remarks, "Drank beer for the first time." His pockets remained as accessible as heretofore to the nimble-fingered gentry. Upon his first visit to Naples, he records very naively, "Three silk handkerchiefs have been stolen from me here,—which is one more than in London." At Jaffa, on his way from Egypt to Palestine, besides the robbery of coins alluded to some time back, he lost a choice autograph manuscript of Mozart which had cost him two hundred and fifty francs at Salzburg. If careless in these particulars, he was very watchful and jealous of opportunities to uphold America's position in the world. He took special pains to inform the mint-masters at various points concerning the superior appliances and machinery of the Philadelphia Mint. On the way back from Lapland, while steaming southward along the upper waters of the Gulf of Bothnia, he writes, under date of July 4, 1871, "This being our national holiday, I put up my flag on the door of my berth, but was obliged to explain the meaning of the holiday to nearly all the passengers." While in England, he met at Manchester a barrister who had formerly been his guest

in Philadelphia. This gentleman proposed to introduce him to an American lawyer then practising there. "I asked the name. He said it was Judah P. Benjamin. I declined the invitation."

Wherever Mr. Mickley journeyed, so long as any fresh acquisition of knowledge was to be gained the old traveller appeared insensible to fatigue. When half-way up the Great Pyramid an English group who were in his company stopped and insisted upon going no farther. He resolutely continued, and they, unwilling to see so aged a man out-distance them, followed reluctantly, until all reached the summit and congratulated each other on the famous view. In St. Petersburg, Moscow, and other Russian cities, which he visited in the winter season, he was equally untiring and undaunted. As a specimen of his accuracy of observation, he writes during his first journey in Italy, "I counted forty-six tunnels between Pisa and Bologna." Several severe accidents fell to his lot. In Rome, while exploring a dark, arched passage, he fell into "Cicero's Well," receiving severe bruises. In a street in Constantinople, where there are no sidewalks, he was knocked down by a runaway horse and taken up for dead, remaining insensible for several hours. The former of these mishaps occupies three lines in his diary; the latter, twelve lines. On his third visit to Leipsic he was confined in his room for several weeks with an attack of smallpox. But in regard to none of these accidents, although an aged man, thousands of miles from home, and entirely alone, does he betray any symptoms of apprehension. He merely adds, on the date of his recovery from the attack at Leipsic, "This sickness has detained me much longer than I had expected to stay."

In one of Mickley's trips he made a not unimportant contribution to musical history. Almost every student of instrumental music is acquainted with the name of Jacob Steiner or Stainer, the most successful of violin-makers outside of the Cremonese school of workmen. Of Steiner's life but little is

known, and no biography of him extant in either French, German, or English contains either the date or place of his death. The account commonly given is that he separated from his wife and died in a convent. Mr. Mickley, with his accustomed perseverance, started out to see if this matter might not be cleared up. At Innsbruck he inquired in vain for information. As Fétis and Forster both fixed his birthplace at Absom, a small village some twelve miles from Innsbruck, Mickley repaired thither. For some time his errand was fruitless. He stopped in at a little shop where an old woman sold photographs, etc. "I asked her, 'Did you never hear of Jacob Steiner, the violin-maker?' She replied, 'There is no Steiner nor violin-maker living in this town.' I then said that a celebrated violin-maker of that name, of whom I desired some information, had lived there two hundred years before. She replied, quite seriously, 'I am not two hundred years old.'" A few minutes later, in the course of his walk, his eye fell upon an old church, the outer wall of which contained a number of stone tablets with inscriptions. A search of five minutes revealed the desired information. On a plain tablet Steiner's name was found, together with the information, given in very old-fashioned German, that he had died there in 1683, "at the rising of the sun."

The closing field of Mr. Mickley's travels covered Southern France and Spain, Lisbon, where he passed the winter of 1871-72, and Madrid. The weather being very severe, he was detained two months at Lisbon, where he engaged a teacher and took daily lessons in Portuguese. He had done the same at Stockholm the previous winter with the Swedish language, which he mastered pretty thoroughly. At Madrid he examined what he emphatically pronounced the finest collection of coins in the world, numbering one hundred and fifty thousand specimens. He adds, "This is the only place in Europe where the subject is properly understood. Alfonzo V., King of Aragon, in the

fifteenth century, was the first person known to have collected coins for study or amusement, and Augustin, Archbishop of Tarragona, was the first writer on the subject. The science of numismatics is, therefore, of Spanish origin."

Mr. Mickley left Madrid in March, crossing the Pyrenees and arriving in Paris on the 24th of that month, his seventy-third birthday. He "made the tour of three hundred and sixty-three miles in twelve hours, without being in the least fatigued." After a few weeks passed in Paris and in revisiting friends in England, he sailed for home, arriving in Philadelphia June 5, 1872, exactly three years from the date of his departure.

It was surprising to his friends how little change the lapse of years and the somewhat rugged incidents of travel had made in Mr. Mickley. He quickly settled down, and, as nearly as possible, resumed his old habits. He bought himself a residence, but followed the Paris custom of taking his meals elsewhere. In the house he was entirely alone, even without a servant. After a time he showed some disposition to concede to "luxuries" which he had previously ignored. Carpets he had never used in his life, but he now admitted that they were very pleasant and comfortable, and ordered his house to be carpeted throughout. The arrangement of his library in the new quarters was a great pleasure, and took some time. Mr. Mickley was in no sense of the word a politician, but he voted pretty regularly. An incident connected with his last visit to the polls was amusing. Having been three years absent, a patriotic Hibernian, who kept the window-book and knew nothing of him, demanded to see his tax-receipt. The old gentleman went quietly home and brought back the desired document. He was next asked if he could read and write, which question, however, was not pressed. The last scene in Mr. Mickley's life was as quiet and peaceful as its whole tenor had been. On the afternoon of February 15, 1878, Mr. Carl Plagemann, the well-known

musician and a friend of many years' standing, called at his house. While he waited, Mr. Mickley wrapped for him some violin-strings, the last work of his hands. He requested Mr. Plagemann to go with him that evening to visit another old friend,—Oliver Hopkinson, Esq., at whose house there were to be some quartettes. "I have a letter," he said, "from the Russian ambassador, a part of which I am unable to translate. A Russian lady is to play the piano there this evening, and I shall ask her to help me out." Mr. Plagemann could not go, and, as so often before, Mr. Mickley started out alone. Just before reaching the house of Mr. Hopkinson he was taken suddenly ill, and, chancing to be close by the residence of his physician, Dr. Meigs, he stopped there and rang the bell. As the door opened, he said in husky tones, "I am suffocating." He walked in and ascended the stairs without assistance. Then he said, "Take me to a window." As this was being done, he fell back insensible into the arms of the attendants, and, a few minutes later, breathed his last.

Thus, on the very western edge of fourscore years, ended this long and industrious, this peaceful and beautiful life. In our land of busy and constant action there have been few like it,—surely none happier. Serene at the close as it was placid in its course, its lot had been cast ever between quiet shores, which it enriched on either hand with its accumulated gifts of knowledge and of taste. And at the close of it all there could be no happier eulogy than the one modestly yet comprehensively delivered by his old and congenial friend William E. Dubois, himself since summoned to take the same mysterious journey. "In fine," says he, "Mr. Mickley seemed superior to any meanness; free from vulgar passions and habits, from pride and vanity, from evil speaking and harsh judging. He was eminently sincere, affable, kind, and gentle: in the best sense of the word he was a gentleman."

J. BUNTING.